

FOR
THE
RECORD

Connecticut
Community
Colleges

Education That Works For a Lifetime

**To: The Honorable Toni Nathaniel Harp, Senate Chair
The Honorable Toni E. Walker, House Chair
Members of the Appropriations Committee**

**From: Dr. Louise S. Berry, Chair
Mr. William McGurk, Vice Chair
Connecticut Community College Board of Trustees**

Remarks for the Appropriations Committee - February 28, 2011

Good afternoon, Sen. Harp and Representative Walker, members of the Committee.

I want to take a few minutes of your time to talk about the role of the Board in setting policies, including financial policies, that guide the State's 12 community colleges and of the Board's efforts to ensure affordable, accessible, and widely available educational opportunities that help students to succeed and to prepare for entry into the Connecticut workforce.

Sixteen members of the Board are appointed by the Governor and two members are elected by students. The members have experience in business, finance, government, education, law, and the state's industries and they represent each of Connecticut's counties. I have served as Chair of the Board since 2004 and as a Board member since 1991. My husband preceded me on the Board, and we were both among the community founders of Quinebaug Valley Community College in Danielson. Two members of our Board have served as Community College Trustees for over 30 years.

Student success is the guiding principle for Board actions, with each vote debated in the context of benefits for students and for the communities served by each community college. Each Board decision considers:

- *Will students be better off?*
- *Will colleges be better able to respond to community needs and student needs by providing pathways to employment and economic growth?*

The Board's policies govern and provide oversight for:

- academic program development and quality instruction
- educational services that help students, particularly underprepared students, to complete programs
- articulation agreements that facilitate transfer to four-year programs
- tuition and fees
- financial aid programs that maximize Federal aid for students, especially through Pell grants.
- delivery of instruction, student services, information and library resources through technology solutions that are cost effective and efficient
- partnerships with the state's businesses and industries that provide a skilled workforce to spur economic vitality, entrepreneurship, and job creation.

Board of Trustees
Community-Technical Colleges
61 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT 06105
860.244.7600 phone
860.244.7886 fax
www.commnet.edu

The Board shares many of President Obama's and Governor Malloy's goals for higher education and has demonstrated successful outcomes over many years, particularly in

- increasing credit enrollments that lead to the acquisition of degrees and workforce credentials
- Improving retention and graduation rates through participation in national, grant-funded student success initiatives such as Achieving the Dream
- Maintaining affordable tuition benchmarked against regional comparisons
- Closer relationships with high schools, technical schools and universities.
- Tracking student educational and employment outcomes

Connecticut's Community Colleges have won 4 USDOL grants for community based job training in health care, energy, and manufacturing bringing millions of Federal dollars into Connecticut since 2005 through public and private grants for community college students and workforce development.

We understand well that the State of Connecticut faces daunting fiscal challenges and we realize completely that the community colleges need to be part of the solution, and we believe our success in streamlining our operations, finding savings, and managing responsibly can contribute to this solution. But the budget reductions for the Community Colleges in the current budget recommendations appear to be well beyond the levels of proposed reductions for other units of higher education and other agencies. This inequity threatens community colleges and community college students, the state's most needy and needed students, unfairly.

As you consider the budget decisions before you today and over the next several weeks, I urge you to consider the information presented today, but also please ask yourself the same questions the Board asks in coming to its decisions:

- *Will students be better off?*
- *Will colleges be better able to respond to community needs and student needs by providing pathways to employment and economic growth?*



**To: The Honorable Toni Nathaniel Harp, Senate Chair
The Honorable Toni E. Walker, House Chair
Members of the Appropriations Committee**

**From: Dr. Louise S. Berry, Chair
Mr. William McGurk, Vice Chair
Connecticut Community College Board of Trustees**

Remarks for the Appropriations Committee - February 28, 2011

Good afternoon.

I'm William McGurk the President of Rockville Savings Bank and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees. I was appointed to the Board in 2005 and I serve on the Board's Finance, Budget and Facilities Committee, and as the Chair of the Audit Committee. I am also a member of Manchester Community College's Foundation Board and of Asnuntuck Community College's Foundation Board.

I want to speak very briefly about the financial stewardship exercised by the Board and to assure you that the financial management and oversight of the college and system budgets are of the highest caliber as verified by the Board's Audit Committee and our external auditors.

As the Governor seeks to adopt Generally Accepted Accounting Principles or "GAAP" for the state and all its agencies, I think it's important for you to know that the Board has employed GAAP accounting practices since 2002. Our financial statements are audited annually by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, and quarterly budgetary reports are submitted as a matter of course to the Department of Higher Education, the General Assembly, the Office of Policy and Management, and the Office of Fiscal Analysis as required by statute. We used to say that "ours was the spirit of complete cooperation," but now we say "ours is the spirit of full disclosure."

In working with PriceWaterhouseCoopers and the Board's Audit Committee, which reports regularly to the Finance Budget and Facilities Committee, I am consistently proud and pleased to repeat the high praise given by these external financial experts to the Board's auditing process and the internal financial controls that have been established to ensure that State and student resources are managed to the highest standards, providing accountability in every area of college and system finance. In particular, our external auditors cite the importance of our strong and effective centralized fiscal controls as an important factor in mitigating the financial risks that are inherent in any widely distributed organization such as the community college system.

I share Mrs. Berry's pride in the Board's many accomplishments but I'm particularly pleased with the administrative efficiencies and savings that have been realized. This streamlining and an

integrated delivery system has allowed us to maintain tuition and fees at affordable levels in order to serve increasing numbers of students even in the face of declining state resources.

A recent analysis of peer data for the Northeast Region's two-year public college sector reveals very favorable resource allocation comparisons between the Connecticut Community Colleges and other 2-year public colleges in the Northeast. This data, from the U.S. Department of Education's "IPEDS" System (or "Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System"), shows that, as compared to eleven Northeastern States:

- Connecticut Community Colleges spend a substantially *larger* proportion of total resources on those functions which directly support teaching and student success – 66% compared with a Northeast average of 57% - on:
 - Direct classroom, laboratory and clinical instruction
 - Academic support for students, faculty and academic programming, and
 - Student support services including counseling, advising, financial aid and other essential services.
- At the same time, Connecticut Community Colleges spend a *smaller* proportion of total resources – 14% compared with a Northeast average of 16% - on those non-instructional functions which provide executive, fiscal, human resource, information technology and other administrative support.
- The IPEDS data also illustrate Connecticut's staffing efficiencies as indicated by much higher numbers of Students served per Non-Faculty position:
 - In Connecticut, there are 204 FTE Students served for each *Executive, Administrative or Managerial* position, as compared with a Northeast average of only 118 Students;
 - In Connecticut, there are 28 FTE Students served for each *Non-Faculty* position, as compared with a Northeast average of only 21 Students;
- At the same time, Connecticut Community Colleges allocate the same level of *Faculty* positions as compared to the average of two-year public colleges across the Northeast States – with each FTE Faculty position serving 20 FTE Students.

We believe these comparisons speak well of Connecticut's Community Colleges and verify the results of ongoing efforts to continuously benchmark and improve our performance so that we can improve the lives of the students that turn to us for access and success through community college education.

Back to Louise:

As you consider the budget decisions before you today and over the next several weeks, I urge you to consider the information we present today, but also please ask yourself the same questions the Board asks in coming to its decisions:

- *Will students be better off?*
- *Will colleges be better able to respond to community needs and student needs by providing pathways to employment and economic growth?*

ENLARGING CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMY BY SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

The Connecticut Community Colleges provide:

- (1) career education for jobs in areas such as nursing and allied health, information technology, bioscience, engineering technologies, and early childhood education;
- (2) general study, including continuing education, for career advancement;
- (3) transfer programs to expand access to the baccalaureate;
- (4) developmental programs to reduce academic barriers;
- (5) student services to enhance student success; and
- (6) community service programs to address community issues.

These educational programs and services provide the State of Connecticut and its Knowledge Economy with a solid, statewide and regional foundation for workforce development, business investment, job creation, and economic vitality.

ENROLLMENT – CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT

In fall 2010, a record-high 58,253 students, 53% of all the undergraduates in Connecticut public higher education, were enrolled at the Community Colleges - the eighth year of record breaking growth in both headcount and FTE numbers. In addition, nearly 35,000 students enroll throughout the year in non-credit programs that build basic skills, communication and workforce competencies.

INCREASING DEMAND

Headcount enrollment in credit programs has grown by 43% above 2000, equating to 17,000 more students and a 68% growth in Full Time Equivalent students. Full-time enrollment has grown by 101% since 2000 filling in-demand courses to capacity. The majority of students still study part-time (63%) while also working to support themselves and their families while attending college.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The average age of students is 27. Currently, nearly 45% of all students are under age 22, yet 50% are between the ages of 22 and 50 indicating the significant role played by community colleges in educating Connecticut's adult learners. Community Colleges provide access to educational opportunities and academic success for every learner including those with limited English proficiency. Improved skills make employment and career advancement opportunities, enhanced earning potential, and an improved quality of life achievable goals for those who are educated for the competitive job market of the global economy. As Connecticut's economy struggles to recover from dramatic declines, its Community Colleges have become the institutions of choice for displaced workers, upgrading skills, and incumbent worker training.

Over two-thirds of all the minority undergraduates enrolled in public higher education in Connecticut are attending community colleges. Minority enrollments represent 38% of the Community College student body reflecting a 49% increase at the twelve colleges since 2006. The market demand that we are seeing today, with record enrollments in both credit and non-credit programs, is a reflection of the relevance of the community college programs and delivery system to current student, state and community needs.

technologically literate workforce required by the state's employers and the workforce of the 21st century. Nearly 35,000 students enrolled in non-credit courses during 2009-2010 and registrations for both credit and non-credit programs show over 100,000 students taking advantage of community college programs each year. Students taking non-credit, skill-building or personal interest programs also focus on

- Gaining new skills and improved literacy
- Remaining current with changing technology
- Obtaining employment and career advancement
- Numerous large and small businesses are served each year by the Business and Industry Services Network and each college's Continuing Education Department.

DYNAMIC AND RESPONSIVE CURRICULA

Curriculum development at Community Colleges reflects a high level of responsiveness to the changing economy. Each year, new programs are added and low enrollment programs are terminated in light of market demand. Beyond these efforts to keep curricula current and responsive to State and student needs, during the last five years, the Community Colleges have been successful in winning highly competitive Federal grants from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Labor to expand instruction and educational services to overcome academic achievement gaps among disadvantaged populations and to prepare students for 21st century careers in engineering technologies, advanced manufacturing, allied health and nursing. Connecticut is the only state in the nation to win 4 USDOL Community Based Job Training Grants directed to community colleges in nursing and allied health, manufacturing and energy.

ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY and DISTANCE LEARNING

Investments at all twelve colleges in the system have implemented and upgraded instructional technology, faculty development programs, and library and learning center resources, making access to technical education and the tools of technology available to every student. The Community Colleges have become the state's largest provider of distance education through on-line courses and have adopted Blackboard Vista as a learning management system to support on-ground classes that are "web-enhanced" with online course materials and activities, "hybrid" classes that include a mix of classroom-based and online teaching as part of the classroom meeting schedule, as well as fully-online courses. This course management system offers opportunities to fully integrate the best practices of online teaching to improve both teaching and learning. Community College faculty have embraced this instructional technology solution that enables faculty to share digital content and to collaborate on course development and delivery. The information technology infrastructure and staffing to provide and support these and other services to twelve colleges resides in a single, cost-effective system office data center operation.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Data from the 2010 Census indicate that an associate degree graduate can expect to earn approximately \$600,000 more during a working life than a high school graduate. If a student continues through transfer to earn a bachelor's degree, he or she can expect to earn \$1 million more in lifetime income. Statistics from the Connecticut Department of Labor indicate that earnings for students in targeted degree programs, the focus of Federal job-training grants including Nursing, Respiratory Care, Physical Therapy Assistant, Radiologic Technician and Medical Assistant, increased from \$23,626 in 2005 to \$57,740 in 2008 – a 144 percent increase.

Economic studies from Economic Modeling Specialist, Inc., using public health, welfare, unemployment, and crime statistics reveal that increased education levels are related to:

can improve the lives of the students that turn to us for access and success through community college education.

FINANCIAL ACCESS THROUGH STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

A combination of federal, state, and college funding provided essential support for access to higher education for 46% of all community college students during FY 2009-2010. Approximately 46% of all students attending Connecticut Community Colleges receive financial aid, and nearly one half (49%) of Connecticut Community College Financial Aid recipients attend as full-time students.

Financial Aid applications continue to increase on an annual basis. Latest figures show that there has been a 164% increase in financial aid applications since 2001, with the CCC Banner Financial Aid System processing 55,655 applications in 2009-10. The numbers of students receiving Financial Aid has increased by 159% since 2001, and student awards have increased by 266% since that time. The Connecticut Community Colleges have developed a nationally-recognized model for the delivery of financial aid services to students by creating an infrastructure at the System Office that supports the financial aid activities at 12 colleges. We offer a technology solution, a "service bureau" approach, that is a virtual 24/7 financial aid office that streamlines the application and award process and assists students and campus-based financial aid offices

Since the development of the financial aid services office in the 2000-2001 academic year, phenomenal growth in applications and financial aid awards to students has been experienced through the streamlined system that has maximized federal student aid dollars to benefit our students. The number of Pell Grant Recipients has increased by 181% since 2001 and the Pell Grant Awards have increased by 427%.

In accordance with federal regulations, we have a stringent satisfactory academic progress policy that applies to all students receiving financial aid from any source. Students not making progress lose their financial aid eligibility. Our strategies for the delivery of financial aid services are always constructed with exacting federal & state compliance and accountability in mind. Federal compliance audits (A-133) conducted by the Auditors of Public Accounts have consistently reported no compliance issues in the administration of the federal financial aid programs.

Nearly 90% percent of the aid awarded at Community Colleges is in the form of grants to avoid student indebtedness. The typical community college financial aid recipient is a single working mother whose household income averaged less than \$29,000 compared with over \$68,000 as the median household income for the state.

INVESTING IN STUDENT SUCCESS AND THE STATE'S FUTURE

According to the 2006 report by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, New England 2020, Connecticut is predicted to have notable declines in its working age population as a result of retirements and outmigration. At the same time, the minority component of the working-age population will continue to increase. By 2020, the report predicts that more than a quarter of Connecticut's working-age population (28%) will be composed of minority populations. "The youngest workers ... are even more likely to be minorities than the general working age population. By 2020, nearly half of the 25-29 year olds will be minorities in the three southern New England states."

The region's African American adults have seen positive increases in educational achievement from 1990 to 2000, with the number of African American adults participating in college up 5.6% and the number of degree holders up 1.2%, but these numbers have increased more slowly than

Connecticut is to maintain its competitive edge in technology, bioscience, precision manufacturing, its public higher education enterprise must address the achievement gap faced by its students and invest in preparing successful, well educated associate degree and certificate graduates. For Connecticut to prosper, these graduates must be able to enter the Connecticut economy with the abilities needed to secure employment, to advance in their careers, and to keep pace with technological changes as well as changes in the economy.